

Message Text

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67

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MC-02 SAJ-01 EB-11 COME-00 OMB-01

TRSE-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9765

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS FOR ARMY ARM DIV

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: MARR, NATO, BE

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE BELGIAN PARTICIPATION IN HAWK-HELIP

REF: (A) USNATO 220; (B) BRUSSELS 457

1. REF (A) REPORTED BELGIAN INDICATIONS THAT GOB MIGHT PARTICIPATE IN HAWK-HELIP PROGRAM DESPITE JULY 1972 DECISION TO WITHDRAW. REF (B) CONFIRMED RENEWED BELGIAN INTEREST BY REPORTING BELGIAN DEFENSE MINISTER'S COMMENT TO AMBASSADOR STRAUZ-HUPE THAT GOB HAD NOW IN FACT DECIDED TO PURCHASE HAWK-HELIP FOR A VALUE OF 1500 MILLION BELGIAN FRANCS. MINISTER'S REMARK WAS CONFIRMED BY BELGIAN CHIEF OF STAFF ON JANUARY 29, 1974 TO GENERAL PATTON, DIRECTOR, J-7 USEUCOM AND CHIEF MAAG. HOWEVER SUBSEQUENT INQUIRIES BY MAAG TO BELGIAN
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ARMY STAFF AND MINDEF OFFICIALS REVEALED SURPRISE ON

THEIR PART THAT DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN HAWK-HELIP HAS BEEN REVERSED.

2. MINDEF VANDEN BOEYNANTS REMARK APPEARS ALSO CONFIRMED BY TRAVEL BY BELGIAN TEAM (JEAN BOLAND, MINECONAFFAIRS; COLONEL CAUCHY, MINDEF) WHO DEPARTED BELGIUM ON JANUARY 27 TO ATTEND MEETING WITH HAWK-HELIP CONTRACTOR RAYTHEON IN ANDOVER, MASS., ON JANUARY 28. PRIMARY PURPOSE OF MEETING IS TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC COMPENSATION FOR BELGIAN INDUSTRY. BELGIAN FIRM SABCA WAS PRIME CONTRACTOR FOR BELGIAN SLICE OF ORIGINAL HAWK CONSORTIUM AND STANDS TO LOSE A REPORTED \$30 MILLION IN CONTRACTS IF BELGIUM DOES NOT PARTICIPATE IN HELIP. (SEVERAL ARTICLES ON THIS SUBJECT APPEARED IN LOCAL PRESS OVER JANUARY 26-27 WEEKEND. LE SOIR IN PARTICULAR PUBLISHED LONG ARTICLE CONTAINING SEVERE SABCO CRITICISM OF GOV OFFICIALS FOR ALLEGED FAILURE TO PROTECT INTEREST OF BELGIAN FIRMS IN THIS PROJECT. ARTICLE QUOTED SABCA OFFICIALS PREDICTING LARGE SCALE LAY-OFF OF SKILLED PERSONNEL IF CONTRACT NOT GUARANTEED.)

3. WE UNDERSTAND THAT BOLAND AND CAUCHY WILL RETURN TO BRUSSELS BY JANUARY 31. THE HAWK-HELIP DECISION REQUIRES APPROVAL BY CABINET ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (CMCES) WHICH NORMALLY MEETS ON THURSDAYS (E.G., JANUARY 31). BOTH HAWK-HELIP AND LANCE PROJECTS HAVE FEBRUARY 1 DEADLINE FOR DECISION BY GOB AND WE ASSUME THAT JANUARY 31 CMCES MEETING WILL DEAL WITH BOTH PROJECTS.

4. COMMENT: CURRENT BELGIAN POLITICAL SITUATION WHERE CABINET HAS ONLY CARETAKER STATUS COULD POSE PROBLEM IN REACHING DECISIONS ON THESE TWO PROJECTS. HOWEVER, AS IT IS CARETAKER CABINET WHICH DECIDES WHAT IS ONGOING BUSINESS AND WHAT IS POLICY, CMCES COULD ACT IF IT WISHES.

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